29 April 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Morning Meeting of 29 April 1969

DD/I briefed on Wednesday's NSC agenda, which still includes the item on nuclear arms control/seabeds and possibly an additional [redacted] He noted that the Review Group had been seized with a potential NSC item on the sale of $15 million worth of U. S. corn to the Soviet Union. He noted OER's position that this would be a one-shot sale in view of anticipated Soviet self-sufficiency in the years ahead. The item has been dropped for the moment, and the Director recalled its having been mentioned at a previous NSC meeting.

Godfrey called attention to The Situation in Vietnam of 28 April, which notes the possibility that the North Vietnamese may be moving surface-to-air missiles into the Laotian Panhandle. 25X1

[redacted]

Carver advised he has received word that Secretary Rogers may ask for a full-scale briefing on Vietnam sometime this week.

Carver noted that Philip Habib is in town.

Maury reported that Senator Gaylord Nelson will not be available for briefings this week.

Maury noted that he got in touch with Senator Pell's office and determined that the Senator is interested only in answers to the questions stated in the questionnaire prepared by the Gore Subcommittee.

Maury expressed concern over Senator Fulbright's reported interest in CBW. He noted that the Director can expect to be called to testify on Soviet CBW and perhaps questioned on our external

research pertaining to the behavioral sciences. The Director noted that he will attempt to handle any related problem with Senator Fulbright. Maury noted that the source of his concern was the item in today's Washington Post, "Chemical War Work Faces Probe."

Bross briefed on his 28 April memorandum concerning his meeting of that date with [redacted] and the substance of Mr. Mayo's memorandum to the President on Fiscal Year 1970 intelligence program savings. He noted that he will be seeing Jim Clark tomorrow, at which time he will seek to make our presentation [redacted] clear. He received the Director's concurrence in his having a rather candid conversation with Jim Clark on [redacted] role. The Director noted that he will be seeing Secretary Packard today and may raise the problem with him at that time. 25X1 25X1 25X1

*Chamberlain for DD/S&T provided a critique of John McNaughton's reported speech before the International Arms Control Symposium in 1962 as related in the 5 May issue of Newsweek. The Director asked that he pursue the matter and provide a brief written summary.

*The Director asked that OGC carefully examine all possibilities of our riding piggyback on the Daniels bill in order to get the related retirement advantages. He pointed to the problems related to separate enabling legislation and indicated a willingness to discuss the matter with Senator McGee and selected members of our own subcommittees once OGC has done the necessary homework.

The Director called attention to Stewart Alsop's piece in the 5 May issue of Newsweek entitled "Is the War Lost?"

[redacted] 25X1

L. K. White

*Extracted and sent to action officer

# Chemical War Work Faces Probe

By George C. Wilson
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee will move to new ground Wednesday by holding its first hearing on chemical and biological warfare (CBW).

As in the case of the anti-ballistic missile, Committee Chairman J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.) has decided against entrusting the CBW issue to Congressional military committees alone.

For the Pentagon, the hearing represents a fresh Congressional assault on long accepted and little scrutinized military programs.

Dr. Matthew S. Meselson of Harvard, a recognized authority on CBW activities, will testify before the Fulbright Committee in closed session. Then the Committee will decide where to go next on the issue.

Already, Sen. Clifford P. Case (R-N.J.) has decided to offer an amendment to the Fiscal 1970 defense appropriations bill to require an annual report to Congress on CBW activities.

This same amendment was tacked onto the money bill last year by former Sen. Joseph S. Clark Jr. (D-Pa.), only to be deleted in conference.

Impetus for the new Senate inquiry came from Rep. Richard D. McCarthy (D.-N.Y.), who conducted his own investigation of CBW and discussed the issue with Fulbright last Friday. McCarthy has been invited to sit in on the Senate hearing.

"Chemical and biological warfare activities are shrouded in secrecy—unnecessarily so," McCarthy said after his investigation, which included classified briefings by the Army.

He said the United States has stored about 100 million lethal doses of nerve gas at Rocky Mountain Arsenal in Denver and Tooele Army Depot in Utah, but has no firm policy on CBW.

The Fulbright Committee, according to sources there, believes CBW is a rightful area for its interest because of the foreign policy considerations.

Fulbright on Sunday said "it is a kind of madness" for Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird to keep raising the specter of Russia's surpassing the United States in missiles with [illegible] other means of mass destruction as CBW weapons.

NEWSWEEK
5 MAY 1969

BY STEWART ALSOP

# IS THE WAR LOST?

PARIS—It is glaringly obvious in Paris, though for mysterious reasons it does not seem to be so obvious in Washington, that Cabot Lodge, the chief American negotiator here, is in a virtually hopeless bargaining position. He is like a man trying to sell a house for $50,000 to another man who knows he would be glad to take $15,000 for the place—and might even be willing to give it away.

Lodge's mission is to attempt to negotiate with Hanoi and the NLF an "honorable" political settlement in Vietnam, based on mutual withdrawal of North Vietnamese and American troops. But the Communist side knows—or thinks it knows, which amounts to the same thing—that the Nixon Administration is so anxious to "de-Americanize" the war that a unilateral American withdrawal is inevitable anyway. Under the circumstances, why in the name of Marx and Lenin should the Communists agree to a mutual withdrawal?

The answer is that they presently have no intention whatever of doing so, as they make clear at great and tedious length every week. Moreover, as long as Cabot Lodge's bargaining position remains so feeble, no agreement of any sort is at all likely to emerge from the negotiations here—not, that is, unless the Nixon Administration is ready to accept a lightly camouflaged defeat.

There never was much hope among the American negotiators here that a formal, written agreement to end the war, all spelled out with semicolons and subsidiary clauses, would emerge from the talks. "We'll never get a piece of paper," one American negotiator said to this reporter here six weeks ago. But at that time, the Americans were hoping for a tacit agreement, a sort of peace-by-conspiracy.

## MURKY AGREEMENT

As this agreement was rather murkily envisaged, the war would first be mutually scaled down. "We'd still be shooting at each other, but less and less," one negotiator explained. Then there would be a deal that would give the Communists minority representation in the Saigon government, followed by general elections overseen by "mixed commissions." Meanwhile, North Vietnamese and U.S. and allied forces would be withdrawn on a tacitly agreed schedule.

Even six weeks ago, this scenario sounded pretty dubious. When Cabot Lodge was ambassador in Saigon, he tried to persuade Saigon's then President Ky to adopt a generous program of reconciliation. "Mr. Ambassador," Ky replied, "you do not understand. I regard the Communists as traitors and they regard me as a traitor. If I catch them I'll shoot them, and if they catch me they'll shoot me." It has always been a bit difficult to imagine people who would very much like to shoot each other forming a workable coalition government.

Again, any agreement on mutual withdrawal would be only a camouflaged defeat unless the North Vietnamese agreed to withdraw from their Cambodian and Laotian sanctuaries as well as from South Vietnam. The North Vietnamese have yet to admit that they have any troops in any of these three places.

For such reasons, even six weeks ago, it was difficult to believe that a compromise settlement was possible. By now, to believe that the Communists have any interest in a reasonable settlement it is necessary, like the Red Queen, to "believe six impossible things before breakfast."

## SECRET TALKS

It is necessary to believe, for example, that when the Communists demand—as they have at every formal meeting, week after weary week—the immediate, total, and unilateral withdrawal of the "American imperialist aggressors," they are subtly hinting that they really want to talk about mutual withdrawal. It is necessary to believe that, when they demand a "peace government" excluding all "lackeys"—meaning all members of the present government—they are really hinting that they want to talk about forming a coalition with the present government.

The hopes of six weeks ago were largely based on the assumption that when secret talks began the Communists would show some give. Secret talks have begun, and although in private the Communists are a bit more polite than in the formal meetings, in matters of substance they have not budged a millimeter. So hopes for a compromise settlement are certainly moribund here, if not entirely dead.

The French have from the first considered American hopes for a compromise settlement naïve. During President Nixon's visit to Paris, one of the President's chief policy advisers had a last-minute talk with a high official of the French Government. The talk, as rather gloatingly repeated by the French official, went about like this:

AMERICAN ADVISER: "As you know, the President very much wants peace in Vietnam. But we feel that General de Gaulle ought to understand two things. First, we cannot withdraw American forces without any withdrawal by the other side. Second, we cannot sacrifice the Saigon government."

FRENCH OFFICIAL: "Then the President cannot have peace."

The French, in short, believe that the Communists came to Paris to accept a camouflaged American capitulation, and that eventually the Communists will get what they came for. The French would not be at all displeased if the United States were humiliated in Vietnam as France was humiliated in 1954. But they could be right, all the same, unless Cabot Lodge's bargaining position is somehow improved.

It would be improved by a marked deterioration of the Communist military position in Vietnam or by sharply increased military pressure by our side, or by both. But neither seems at all likely. And it is an insult to the intelligence to argue, as some Washington casuists argue, that the Communists will be more willing to compromise if American forces in Vietnam—and therefore the military pressure on the Communists—are reduced. Communists are serious people—something we Americans should have learned by this time. They are deadly serious about achieving the goal—Communist rule over all Vietnam and in time all Southeast Asia—for which they have fought and bled for more than a generation. It is just plain silly to suppose that if we are nice enough to reduce the military pressure on them, they will be nice enough to abandon that goal.

## BASIC WEAKNESS

President Nixon may, even so, have no choice but to begin withdrawing American troops. For the basic weakness in Cabot Lodge's bargaining position here lies in the simple fact that the American people have lost stomach for the war in Vietnam, and the Communists know it. People who have lost stomach for a war in the end generally lose the war. If that happens, it will be interesting, if perhaps a bit frightening, to see how the American people react to their first lost war.

NEWSWEEK
5 MAY 1969

# SHH! LET'S TELL THE RUSSIANS

by Edward Klein and Robert Littell

*The remarkable incident recounted below has never before been publicly reported—and is quite probably unparalleled in the history of nations. In an age when the physical survival of an entire people may well depend upon the strength of its nuclear arsenal, it seems almost inconceivable that a great power would deliberately give away some of its nuclear expertise to its most formidable adversary. Yet recently two Newsweek general editors discovered that during the Administration of John F. Kennedy the United States did just that. The story:*

"Broken arrow! Broken arrow!" With ominous insistence, the code phrase indicating that a nuclear accident had occurred flashed into Strategic Air Command headquarters in Omaha. Then came the details: a B-52 bomber, carrying two 24-megaton bombs, had crashed outside Goldsboro, N.C., during a routine training mission. Neither of the bombs had exploded—which was only to be expected since each was equipped with six interlocking safety devices designed to prevent accidental detonation. But when Air Force technicians arrived on the scene, they were stunned to discover that five of the six safety devices on one warhead had been triggered in its fall. "Only a single switch," says nuclear physicist Ralph E. Lapp, "prevented the bomb from detonating and spreading fire and destruction over a wide area."

This near holocaust occurred on Jan. 24, 1961—four days after the inauguration of John F. Kennedy. And as the new President soon learned, it was not an isolated affair. Since the end of World War II, Kennedy was told, there had been more than 60 accidents involving nuclear weapons—including two cases in which nuclear-tipped anti-aircraft missiles were actually launched by inadvertence.

**Prediction:** Kennedy's dismay at this was heightened by the no less disturbing discovery that the physical safeguards designed during the Eisenhower Administration to prevent local commanders from unleashing nuclear weapons at their own discretion were far from foolproof. Inevitably, JFK asked himself an obvious question: what would happen if a U.S. nuclear weapon accidentally exploded over an American city and a U.S. general, with his finger on a nuclear button, interpreted this as the beginning of a Soviet attack? The probable answer seemed all too clear. "There is a significant chance," a group of Ohio State University experts wrote at the time, "that a major accidental war may occur at some time in the 1960s."

Spurred on by Kennedy's concern, American scientists quite quickly perfected a whole spectrum of safety devices which would allow the U.S. to respond to a nuclear threat within a matter of minutes, yet put control of nuclear weaponry back where it belonged—in the hands of the President rather than in those of local commanders. Some of these devices, including so-called "permissive action links," made it physically impossible to arm and launch nuclear weapons unless two or more local commanders received a series of coded electronic signals that only the President could originate. Others, such as inertial arming switches that activated a warhead only after a missile accelerated out of its silo, made it physically impossible for a warhead to explode on the ground.

These U.S. precautions, however, solved only half the problem involved in the avoidance of accidental war. For the Russians, in the parlance of the U.S. intelligence community, were "rough-edge boys"—that is, they were extremely prone to nuclear accidents. Nikita Khrushchev himself once reportedly admitted that an erratic Soviet missile had to be destroyed in flight as it streaked toward Alaska. And the Soviets were fully aware of their own inadequacies—so much so that they kept their nuclear warheads as much as 50 miles from their missile sites and never risked going on full missile alert.

**Dangers:** The full dimensions of the Soviet problem were brought home to JFK when, at the height of the Cuban missile confrontation, the Central Intelligence Agency reported that the Russians had still failed to order a full missile alert. And in the months that followed the Cuban showdown, the Kennedy Administration began to consider what, if anything, the U.S. should do to help the Russians solve their problem. There was an unmistakable community of interest involved. Informing the Russians how the U.S. had accident-proofed its nuclear forces would encourage Moscow to apply similar techniques to its own weapons and thereby reduce the chances of an accidental nuclear war. But there were also unmistakable dangers. For if the Soviets became less accident prone, they would be more likely to go to a full missile alert during any subsequent East-West confrontation. And if it ever came to war, that readiness would inevitably be translated into tens of millions of additional American deaths.

But, at bottom, recalls U.S. strategic thinker Herman Kahn, "we were much more afraid of accidental war than of deliberate war ... And so the President decided to make the Russians aware of our permissive-action link system."

His decision made, Kennedy sat down with Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and Pentagon General Counsel John T. McNaughton to discuss how—and how much—the Russians should be told. The three men agreed that the information would have to be passed on publicly in order to make it credible to the Kremlin. But the suggestion that McNamara himself should "signal" the Russians in a public speech was quickly dismissed; such a gesture by the Secretary of Defense would attract too much attention at home—and, quite possibly, arouse bitter controversy. Ultimately, McNaughton, 41, a brilliant arms-control theoretician, was given the assignment.

On Dec. 19, 1962, at an International Arms Control Symposium at Ann Arbor, Mich., McNaughton made his move. "Let us consider the problem of preventing war by accident," he began. Then, in general terms, he proceeded to spell out some of the precautions the U.S. had adopted. "There are," he said, "various devices built into the weapons themselves which prevent improper use. For

McNaughton: Now hear this

example, there may be an arming switch which can be activated only by remote control. Also, there is the simple device of making the required arming actions too much for one man to handle. As for missiles, the critical power supply for the 'button' may be provided by a man [far away] turning a hand crank not unlike the one used on an ice-cream freezer."

At the end of his speech, McNaughton went to great pains to make certain that the Russians understood that he was speaking for their benefit. Said he: "It is, of course, hoped—and I wish to emphasize this—that the Soviet Union will see the logic behind these policies and take comparable steps." But even then, the Kennedy Administration was concerned that the Soviets might miss the signal. "In the weeks and months that followed," one American physicist remembers, "U.S. diplomats in both Washington and Moscow repeatedly told the Russians that they should read the McNaughton speech 'because it is important'." Mc-

continued

Naughton himself traveled to Cambridge, Mass., where he spread the gospel among Harvard and MIT professors. Some of those professors later turned up in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, for the 1963 Pugwash Conference. And, there, at least one of them is known to have explained to Soviet scientists Lev Artsimovich, Vladimir Kirillin and Mikhail Millionshchikov how the United States used permissive action links.

**Concept:** John McNaughton is now dead; he was killed in a 1967 plane crash. But the "McNaughton signal" stands as a milestone in nuclear cooperation between the superpowers. Says Harvard Prof. Paul M. Doty Jr., a member of President Kennedy's Science Advisory Committee: "It was the first naked gesture of its kind." True, no "military secrets" were passed to the Russians. But the concept of such safety devices as permissive-action links certainly was—and arms control strategist Thomas C. Schelling points out: "Once you have the concept, a 12-year-old could comprehend the mechanics within minutes."

Beyond that, the signal had a subtle psychological purpose. "We were consciously trying to put arguments in Khrushchev's hands that he could use against his warlike types," recalls one top Kennedy aide. This was a crucial part of Kennedy's plan. For he was aware that Soviet military men feared that their missile forces would become vulnerably "muscle bound" if they were equipped with remote-control communication links and other safety devices. (This was a problem which also worried the U.S. To this day, in fact, the communication system between the White House and U.S. missile bases remains the most vulnerable element in the American nuclear deterrent. Concerned that a Soviet first strike against these links could impair America's ability to retaliate massively in the event of a war, the United States has secretly placed a certain number of Minutemen under the control of local commanders—four of whom, acting in concert, have the ability to fire a missile.)

**Safeguards:** Today, the Soviet nuclear establishment is precisely where John F. Kennedy hoped it would be when he launched "the McNaughton ploy." Though it is not known whether the Russians have adopted the identical techniques used by the U.S., the signal seems to have been read loud and clear in Moscow. According to current U.S. intelligence, the Soviets now employ a wide range of safety devices on their missiles, have an excellent record in preventing nuclear accidents—and put their weapons on full alert when they deem it necessary. All this makes Moscow a more formidable nuclear power than it used to be. But with less than a year left to the decade, the ominous Ohio State prophecy—"a major accidental war may occur at some time in the 1960s"—seems likely to remain unfulfilled.